Window into a Corequisite Classroom

Professor Summer Serpas
Irvine Valley College
Assistant Director, California Acceleration Project

sserpas@jvc.edu
Accelerationproject.org
General overview of principles and best practices of corequisite teaching

Questions?

Window into a corequisite classroom

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General Principles of Corequisite Teaching
More and more research shows that corequisite remediation in both English and math are more effective than traditional remediation. In CA, we saw completion of college-level English rise among all racial/ethnic groups, yet equity gaps still persist.
What do we know about corequisite pedagogy?

Many of the best practices of accelerated pedagogy translate to corequisite pedagogy:

**Just-in-time remediation**
Provide support for students as they work through challenging tasks.

**Low-stakes collaborative practice**
Let students grapple with skills they will need on high-stakes assignments.

**Intentional support for students affective needs**
Employ practices that reduce fear and build feelings of community, connection and belonging.

**Relevant, thinking-oriented curriculum**
Create assignments that ask students to engage with issues that matter, wrestle with open-ended problems, and use resources from the class to reach and defend their own conclusions.
PPIC also interviewed faculty at CA Community Colleges, who illuminated CAP’s practices and added some additional practices that support students in successful corequisite courses.

**Instruction**

- Provide extra time with the instructor to give one-on-one targeted support and build relationships that show “authentic care.”
- Scaffold instruction - break assignments into discrete parts, with support for each task in a way that is individualized and makes no assumptions about what student can and cannot do.
- Be “thoughtful about unconscious biases” and embrace equity-minded teaching practices.
- Maintain a capacity mindset (as opposed to a deficit mindset) and believe students can succeed
Collaborative Classroom Setting

- Create a classroom setting that facilitates discussion and collaboration among students and makes writing a community practice - where instructors and tutors are floating around the classroom to facilitate and lend support.
- This is sometimes even reflected in the furniture and classroom design (e.g. more whiteboard space, furniture that can be moved and reconfigured easily).

Culturally relevant and rigorous curriculum

- Build thematic units and courses based on thought-provoking and relevant content.

Affective Domain

- Support “studenting” skills: study skills, time management, goal setting, and seeking college services and support.

Professional Development

- Provide ongoing support for faculty teaching corequisite courses, including professional development opportunities and communities of practice, to support faculty in making these changes to their teaching styles.
Other important principles

Provide contextualized support

- Support the students to complete the assignments in the section of college-level writing they are in, not just general writing support.

Provide reading support

- Often, when students struggle to write, the struggle is actually more with the reading. Think about how you can support their reading and understanding of the texts in your class.

Think about other types of support students may need

- Students who struggle often don’t just need more writing support - they need other kinds of supports. How can we connect our students with these resources?
Questions?
A Window into a Corequisite Classroom

Mine!
Quick Overview:

*Students are enrolled in 3 classes:*

- **College-Level Writing**
  - 4 units
  - Read at least 400 pages
    - (2 book-length texts, at least 5 different texts)
  - Write 4 essays
    - (minimum 8,000 words)

- **Support Course**
  - 2 units
  - Support the college-level writing class:
    - Essay drafts and support activities (for both reading and writing)

- **Writing Center Support Course**
  - .5 unit
  - 4 conference with a writing instructor
  - 24 hours in the Writing Center
Course Theme: Human Connection
We read, think, write about the concepts of belonging, loneliness, and connection.

Course Texts:

- Excerpts from *How We Show Up: Reclaiming Family, Friendship, and Community* by Mia Birdsong
- Selected episodes from *The Michelle Obama Podcast: Higher Ground*

Pick one for Essay 3:
# Essay Units

## Unit 0: Writing Sample

**Writing Goals:** Low-stakes writing sample integrating ideas from the text with personal experience.

## Unit 1: True Belonging

**Key Questions:** Why are we so disconnected? What are steps I can use to build true belonging, and how do I currently use those steps in my life?

**Writing and Thinking Goals:** Summarize and apply the ideas in one text to your personal experience.

## Unit 2: Better Together

**Key Questions:** Why is human connection important? What factors influence how we connect with others?

**Writing and Thinking Goals:** Synthesize the ideas in multiple texts to create an argument.

## Unit 3: Human Connection in a Memoir

**Key Questions:** How do the ideas we learned about human connection impact an individual’s life?

**Writing and Thinking Goals:** Apply what we have learned about human connection to the experiences shared in a memoir.

## Unit 4: Human Connection in Action

**Key Questions:** What can I do with the knowledge I have acquired about the importance of human connection?

**Writing and Thinking Goals:** Baby step into a research paper by creating an idea for a human connection project based on what we’ve learned and use outside sources.
A Window into Essay 2

Better Together
Overview:
In Essay 2, students are reading multiple texts and working to analyze the causes of loneliness and discuss why connection is important, especially today. In Essay 1, they used one book to answer the prompt, so this is a step up in terms of difficulty.

Prompt:
For this assignment, you will analyze the importance of human connection by discussing the social, cultural, and evolutionary causes of loneliness and its impact on individuals, and then explain why it is important for human beings to connect with one another, arguing why it is important now, maybe more than ever, for individuals to come together and build a more connected world. The purpose of this assignment is for you to closely review texts and present a clear, claim-based discussion. You will also need to support your thesis by citing adequate examples and specific details from the texts.
Assignments in the main course

**Preview Assignments** introduce students to the author and give them a preview of the text in order to prepare them to read.

**Reading Logs** allow students to practice critical reading skills and gather information from the text for their formal essays, and students complete activities as they read at home and in class as we discuss the readings together as a group. They are meant to be a living document, so students work on them throughout the reading assignments for a unit. I provide feedback throughout the unit, and students can revise in response to the feedback before submitting for a grade when they have finished all the reading activities for a unit.

**Sample Essays** provide students with an example of a former student’s approach to the assignment. Students annotate the sample essay and answer reflection questions after reading.

**Graphic Organizers** help students to gather information for their essays in order to organize their thoughts and prepare to write.

**Final draft** of the essay is the culminating activity and main focus of the unit. This assignment is counted entirely toward their College Writing course (the main class). Students can revise if they are unhappy with their grade, but I usually encourage them to keep working on the next essays as they are worth an increasing percentage of their final grade.

**Essay Reflection** gives students the opportunity to reflect on their writing process and share any information I might need to know about their writing process. This is submitted along with the final draft.
Assignments in the support course

**In-class discussions of the reading** are completed each week after a reading assignment is due. Students work in small groups on activities to help them discuss the readings and make sure everyone is understanding the key ideas. I would definitely still do a version of this in a class without support, but the extra time in the support class allows me to go more in depth and take more time with the discussion.

**Prompt Review** assignments ask students to annotate the prompt and answer embedded questions throughout the prompt to check for understanding.

**Reading Wrap-Up Activity** asks students to reflect on their reading experience for each essay and think about how the reading went for them, what they learned about themselves as readers, and how they might read differently for the next essay.

**Rough Draft Submission** takes place while they are drafting. I typically ask students to draft the introduction + one body paragraph before I review. I access their draft in their Google document and provide feedback directly in the draft.

**Optional Discussion Board (extra credit)** allows students to copy and paste their rough draft (introduction + 1 body paragraph) into a class discussion board. I provide feedback on the draft publicly as a comment in the discussion board. This allows students to not only see how their classmates are approaching the essay, but also how I am responding to that essay. This assignment was inspired by this blog and webinar: “Sampling and Remixing: Using Peer Models to Increase Engagement” by Jesus Limón Guzman.

**Individual Conferences** allow students to work one-on-one with me on each essay. These 15-minute Zoom conferences are scheduled throughout the week the essay is due, and students sign up on the Canvas calendar. Often, I review the rough draft submission described above in the individual conference.

**Writing Center Conferences** are required for each essay assignment. Students work one-on-one with an instructor in the college’s Writing Center for feedback on their drafts. Then, they fill out a form discussing their conference to earn credit in the support course.

**Feedback Reflection and Goal Setting Activity** allows students to reflect on the feedback after the essay is graded and create goals for the next essay.

**Check-In Surveys** are completed twice per semester to check in with everyone and make sure things are going okay in our class, in their other classes, and in their lives. I respond with an individual email to each student.
Thank you!

Feel free to contact me with any questions!

Summer Serpas
sserpas@ivc.edu